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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/073,409	02/13/2002	Hideaki Tanaka	111867	3980
25944	7590	03/04/2004	EXAMINER	
OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC P.O. BOX 19928 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22320				MACKEY, JAMES P
		ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER
		1722		

DATE MAILED: 03/04/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/073,409	TANAKA, HIDEAKI
	Examiner James Mackey	Art Unit 1722

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 November 2003.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-11 and 13-16 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 12 and 17-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 01 May 2002 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All
 - b) Some *
 - c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date: _____
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>5-1-02</u> .	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

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1. Applicant's election with traverse of sub-Species B3, claims 17-18 (along with claims 12 and 19-21 generic to Species B) in Paper No. 21 November 2003 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that there is no burden on the Examiner to examine all of the distinct species together. This is not found persuasive because the extra work involved in searching and examining all of the seven distinct species together is a serious burden on the Patent Office.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

2. Claims 1-11 and 13-16 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in Paper No. 21 November 2003.

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

5. Claims 12 and 19-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Publication 2001-18235 in view of Heintz, Jr. (U.S. Patent 2,756,460).

Japan '235 discloses the vulcanizing mold substantially as claimed, comprising a plurality of tread mold pieces 10 each having end surfaces 12 on both sides of a molding surface 11 as seen in the circumferential direction of the tire, the end surfaces each including an edge region situated adjacent to the molding surface to extend in a width direction of the tire tread portion, the mold pieces each comprising a first vent means being in communication with atmosphere and comprised of a narrow gap 17 formed by continuously removing the edge region over substantially the entire width of the tire tread portion, the narrow gap having a width within the claimed range (claim 19) and extending along that portion of the molding surface which corresponds to a land in the tire tread portion (claim 21), the first vent means further comprising a groove 18 formed in each of the end surfaces at a location spaced from the molding surface, the groove being wider than the narrow gap and in communication with the narrow gap and atmosphere (claim 20). Japan '235 does not explicitly disclose a second vent means comprised of fine apertures formed in the molding surface of the mold piece at a region corresponding to a land in the tire tread portion, the second vent means being isolated from the first vent means and being in communication with atmosphere. Heintz, Jr. discloses a vulcanizing mold comprising a plurality of fine vent apertures 20 in communication with atmosphere (col. 2, lines 13, 57) and formed in the molding surface at a region corresponding to a land in the tire tread portion. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Japan '235 by providing the mold pieces with second vent means comprised of a plurality of fine vent apertures, as disclosed in Heintz, Jr., in order to fully vent the mold at the location of sipe blades between mold ribs at a location spaced from the end surfaces of the tread mold pieces, and thereby avoid surface imperfections in the product tire, especially considering that Japan '235

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discloses the need for adequate venting (via vent ridges 15 and cross vents 16) in the vicinity of sipe blades 14.

6. Claims 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japan '235 in view of Heintz, Jr., as applied to claims 12 and 19-21 above, and further in view of Japanese Publication 5-138656.

Japan '235 in combination with Heintz, Jr. does not disclose the apertures of the second vent means as comprising a slit-like aperture in a top surface of a tubular pin member, the top surface forming part of the molding surface. Japan '656 discloses a vulcanizing mold comprising fine vent apertures in the form of a slit-like aperture in a top surface of a tubular pin member, the top surface forming part of the molding surface corresponding to a land in the tire tread portion. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Japan '235, in combination with Heintz, Jr., by providing the fine aperture of the second vent means as a slit-like aperture in a top surface of a tubular pin member, as disclosed in Japan '656, in order to facilitate venting while avoiding spue (spew) formation, and in order to easily provide a vent structure in the tire mold piece. With regard to the dimensions of the vent aperture (claim 18), it would have been obvious and well within the level of ordinary skill in the art to provide the vent aperture disclosed in Japan '656 of such dimensions in order to avoid clogging by rubber, especially considering the teaching of Japan '235 that the vent gap should be from 0.005 to 0.05 mm.

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

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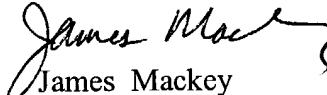
Schmaderer et al. disclose a tire mold having vent gaps 18 of 0.05mm (col. 3, line 47).

Fukushima discloses a tire mold having vent apertures corresponding to vent pin grooves 7, 12 of 0.1mm depth. Wieder and Cotterell (Figures 2-5) each disclose tubular vent pins having slit-like vent apertures.

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James Mackey whose telephone number is 571-272-1135. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wanda Walker can be reached on 571-272-1151. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


James Mackey
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1722

jpm
February 9, 2004

2/9/04